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Contact:

Ellis Smith

esmith@chattanooga.gov

770.331.7191 (cell)

Daisy Madison to Retire as CFO after nearly 20 years

Brent Goldberg to step into critical Chief Financial Officer role, will report directly to Mayor Kelly, and will manage an expanded portfolio of departments and teams including Finance & Administration, Purchasing, Treasury, and Grants & Opportunities

Chattanooga, Tenn. (Monday, Oct. 18, 2021) — Daisy Madison, the city's longtime chief financial officer, will conclude her distinguished career at City Hall this year as she begins her transition into retirement, she told senior staff Monday.

Madison was hired as deputy chief finance officer in 1992 by former mayor Gene Roberts. She served with distinction under a succession of mayors, including Jon Kinsey, Bob Corker, Ron Littlefield, Andy Berke and Tim Kelly.

"I didn't think of it as a job, I really took ownership of the position and looked at it as my opportunity to contribute to the city in which I live," Madison said. "Because I was serving my community, it was important to do the best job that I could, and it was important that it be done professionally and with the highest standards of honesty and integrity."

As senior staff arrived and departed under each new administration, Madison rose through the ranks and was appointed to city treasurer in 2002, and in 2005 she was elevated to chief financial officer and administrator of the department of Finance & Administration, where she has continued to serve at the pleasure of each new mayor.

Over the years, as the technology changed and administrations came and went, one thing remained the same: Madison and her staff kept the city on solid financial footing.

"The one thing I'd want people to know about the government is that the people who work for this city are loyal, dedicated individuals who work hard and care about the residents of this community," Madison said. "I'm eternally grateful to my staff, who are really the people

She's most proud of her work creating additional accountability and transparency around how funds are collected and spent at the city, as well as the award-winning comprehensive annual reports that help residents better understand the inner workings of local government. For her efforts, Madison and the city

were awarded the Government Finance Officers Association certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting, as well as the award for distinguished budget presentation.

In addition, Madison has been recognized for her work upgrading and maintaining the city's AAA bond rating, which both saves taxpayer money and ensures that more resources flow to city services instead of debt service.

"I was thrilled when Daisy agreed to stay on through our first budget and the reorganization of government, but the loss of such an experienced and talented financial manager is certainly going to sting," said Mayor Tim Kelly. "Our community has long been blessed by Daisy's calm competence, her composure under fire, and her enduring kindness to those around her. On behalf of a grateful city, I thank her for her service and salute her on such a dignified conclusion to a career defined by integrity, accountability and leadership."

Prior to her service with the city, she served as a staff auditor for the US General Accounting Office, worked at accounting firm Arthur Anderson & Co., and was internal audit manager for Hamilton County Government, as well as director of financial management for Hamilton County for nearly 15 years.

Given the critical role of the CFO position in city government — the CFO is integral to all budgeting, spending, finance, purchasing and other decisions — Kelly asked his senior staff to begin a transition in which Brent Goldberg will assume the duties of CFO moving forward.

Goldberg — who as chief of staff, was instrumental in managing Kelly's transition into the Mayor's office, the reorganization of government in those initial months, as well as passing the administration's first budget — will continue to report directly to the mayor and, as CFO, will manage an expanded portfolio that includes the Finance & Administration, Purchasing, Treasury, and Grants & Opportunities departments and teams.

"If Chattanooga is to solve our big systemic challenges like affordable housing, homelessness, and persistent poverty, we have to be strategic about the way that we think about our city's financial management and tools," Kelly said. "That's exactly the background and approach that Brent will bring to the CFO role."

The expansion of the CFO role is part of Kelly's long-term strategy to creatively leverage city finance, working with the private sector, the philanthropic sector, and the state and federal governments to make once-in-a-generation investments to tackle Chattanooga's structural issues, close wealth gaps, and expand economic opportunity for all residents.

"I have always been drawn to public service and I have a particular passion for public finance and the strategic role it can have in local government — that's why I'm so excited to serve in this role and help advance Mayor Kelly's vision for our city," Goldberg said. "I want to thank Mayor Kelly for placing his faith in me and Daisy for leaving the city's finances in such great shape as we launch the work of realizing One Chattanooga."

Goldberg is a Certified Public Accountant who previously served as chief business officer for Hamilton County Schools. Prior to that role, he served as executive VP and CFO of Lync Logistics, chief financial officer for the Public Education Foundation, chief operating officer of the City of Chattanooga, director of

accounting at U.S. Xpress, and was a senior auditor at a number of nationally recognized accounting firms.

“I can’t think of a better role for Brent than the critical job of expanding the city’s financial ability to creatively meet the needs of our residents,” Kelly said. “I’m immensely proud of what we’ve accomplished together so far, and with his vast financial experience across the public, private and nonprofit sectors, I would be hard-pressed to find a better candidate to fill the void Daisy leaves behind.”

Joda Thongnophua, who currently serves as Mayor Kelly’s chief policy officer, will serve as interim chief of staff during the transition period.

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